

# Paws of Allegiance

Spring 2021 Newsletter | Paws for Purple Hearts



## Warriors Helping Warriors®

128 Dogs Deployed | 16,355 Therapy Session Participation\* | 10,767 Lives Improved

\*Session slots filled (many Warriors attend multiple sessions)



Paws for Purple Hearts celebrates 10 years of Warriors Helping Warriors®

**"In the midst of this pandemic, we've become even closer, more focused on the mission...the entire staff expands PPH's horizons to make a better world for our veterans and active duty service members and their families. The best people for the greater good. And I get to watch it all move mountains. Thank you PPH staff, for making this world a better place."**

**- Bonnie Bergin, President and Founder**

## 10 Years of PPH

**By: Megan F.**

Paws for Purple Hearts started as a research program at the prestigious Bergin College of Canine Studies. Together with the Menlo Park VA Medical Center, Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® was founded, and our lifelong mission began. With continued success, we established as an independent nonprofit recognized on June 29, 2011.

We are proud to celebrate 10 years of improving the lives of Veterans and Active Duty Service Members facing mobility challenges and trauma-related conditions. We are also happy to announce we achieved accreditation by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). Our National Client Manager, Casey Koslosky, points out that "our membership in ADI demonstrates that we are ethical, follow best practices and put our dogs and clients first." One significant benefit of ADI is that our mobility service dog recipients are now eligible for VA Veterinary Health Benefits. The VA will help cover costs associated with owning a mobility-related Service Dog.

Today, Paws for Purple Hearts has expanded to five facilities across the US, deployed 128 dogs, and directly improved the lives of over 10,000 Warriors.

# The Mission Continues

Paws for Purple Hearts is serving our brave Warriors despite the global pandemic

## New Assistance Dog Teams!

By: Danielle S.

From puppy to placement, a single PPH dog will impact 40-60 Warriors during their training. This was certainly true for our most recent graduates Scout and Delta!

Scout and Delta were picked up from Project 2 Heal in 2018 by our Ruther Glen Team. Delta traveled to our site in San Diego to start her training while Scout stayed in Virginia. Both pups worked hard at their training, gaining experience and maturity every day. The two were reunited when Delta came back to Virginia to finish her training. Meanwhile, Scout and Delta's forever partners were on their own journeys.

Retired Army Sergeant David Wright came to Paws for Purple Hearts as a Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® participant in 2019 after learning about the organization and meeting Scout during a social therapy visit. When visiting David, Scout automatically retrieved his cane when David dropped it. The pair went on to work together in therapy sessions until they were ultimately matched during team training, "Scout has helped my confidence so much so that I feel happier when I wake up."

Casey Koslosky is our National Client Manager. She is responsible for guiding potential clients through the assistance dog application process. She first met Delta during a visit to our Ruther Glen facility and it was love at first sight.

On March 20, 2021, David and Scout graduated as a Service Dog Team and Casey and Delta became our first Ambassador Dog Team, allowing Casey to better demonstrate to clients the types of commands a PPH dog learns.



Service Dog Team:  
David and Scout



PPH Ambassador Team:  
Casey and Delta



Drew is thankful for the support  
of the San Diego community

## PPH San Diego Celebrates Three Years

By: Caitlin D.

On April 12, 2021, Paws for Purple Hearts celebrated three years of successful operations in Southern California and reflected on the growth seen since our establishment there.

In just three years, the San Diego team has hosted over 1,000 hours of Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® for 147 Veterans and Service Members. What started as a small service dog training program from the home of two instructors has since evolved into a 10,000+ square foot facility providing therapy programs and assistance dogs for wounded Veterans. The San Diego team looks forward to continuing to improve the lives of America's Warriors thanks to the generous support of our community.

**"It's amazing to see how much we have grown and accomplished," says Selah Marting, the senior program instructor at Paws for Purple Hearts San Diego. "I forget that just a few years ago, we were training service dogs from our homes and now we are in this huge facility with dozens of dogs, volunteers, and veterans coming through our doors every week."**

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# From Puppy to Placement

PPH dogs positively impact 40-60 Warriors throughout their training journey.

## Pup with a Purpose

By: Julia R.

Impacting hundreds of people daily, Elma, a Paws for Purple Hearts' Specialist Therapy Dog, was placed with the 773rd Civil Engineer Squadron at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. Together with her handler, she spreads love and joy throughout her care facility.



Elma with a member of the 773rd Squadron



Elma is a valued member of the Squadron and the True North Team

According to both her handler and her many coworkers, Elma is integrating into the squadron with "the ease and grace in which she catches her frisbee."

"When we go into shops, the airmen are so excited to see her." She regularly makes her rounds for back scratches and belly rubs, all part of the job.

She's become a true part of the squadron and staple in the facility. "When team members pet her they report the interaction gives them a break from the stress of the day and what's going on in their lives."

Elma has been introduced to every shop in the squadron, been in work trucks, was in the lead truck in the Snow Barn's parade, had a birthday party at work, and has her own bed and snacks in the 1st Sergeant's office. She is well loved and valued at the 773rd CES.



Maggie and our new "D" litter puppies

## Puppies Deployed

By: Megan F.

It all starts with a very special puppy. Maggie, a golden retriever/labrador mix, is now three years old and is one of our best tempered dogs, and she just welcomed a new litter of eight beautiful pups on April 7, 2021.

**"Her first litter is now one year old and they are showing great promise as future assistance dogs," said Tamara, Senior Program Instructor. "Passing on her line is so important, she is the sweetest pup. Her pups are making a big impact on our Warriors"**

Being properly socialized during the first four months of a puppy's life is crucial, with our puppy petting program our puppies are able to experience a variety of people and learn to be handled. The puppies usually come to Menlo Park for puppy petting but because of the pandemic, they stayed solely at our headquarters in Penngrove, CA. Puppy petting is essential for the success of our pups. Students from Bergin University of Canine Studies have been providing that much needed socialization to help start their training process.

All of our dogs are purpose bred, meaning they are bred to have specific characteristics such as a calm temperament, high intelligence and moderately large size - qualities that give them the best possible chance of success. These characteristics are passed down from generation to generation, so the best dogs have the best puppies who grow up to be the best service dogs. With this litter, we have deployed 18 new dogs in our Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® programs this year.

**To donate, text PURPLEPAWS to 707070 or visit [www.paws4ph.org/donate](http://www.paws4ph.org/donate)**

# Building a Community Through Giving

By: Jessica D.

Paws for Purple Hearts was one of four organizations recently invited to participate in a round table discussion with United States Senator John Cornyn. Senator Cornyn was born and raised in the Lone Star State and is a huge proponent of volunteerism. His devotion to our Military Service Members, Veterans and the community is demonstrated by his actions during the event.

He took time to hear the impact that volunteers have on our Warriors, dogs and most importantly, our mission; he also got to meet one of our service dogs-in-training, Eaton, and her Paws for Purple Hearts trainer, Jenny. Eaton is one of San Antonio's newest additions and charmed Senator Cornyn with her personality and grasp of commands. She's a rockstar!

A community is only as strong as its individuals. Our very own Texas volunteers have dedicated over 7,000 hours to San Antonio causes since 2015. Volunteering can be an enriching experience that can include benefits like connecting with others in your community, boosting social skills, and expanding your network.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, visit our website [paws4ph.org](http://paws4ph.org) to fill out an application!



U.S. Senator John Cornyn visited our San Antonio Facility for National Volunteer Appreciation Week.

Follow Paws for Purple Hearts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram



## **Paws for Purple Hearts**

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postage

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### **Paws for Purple Hearts**

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### **Our Locations**

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**Ruther Glen, Virginia** (804) 589-0077

**San Antonio, Texas** (210) 526-0100

**San Diego, California** (858) 779-2404

**Paws for Purple Hearts is licensed by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, chartered by an Act of Congress for combat-wounded Veterans.**

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